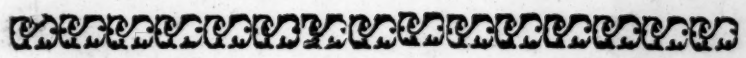
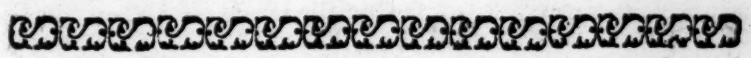


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A SHORT
ANSWER
To a Long
Rabbinical LETTER.



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Theology vol 12
A SHORT
ANSWER

To a Long

Rabbinical LETTER,

Supposed to be wrote to

Mr. *WOOLSTON*.

By WILLIAM GARDINER, L. L. B. *K*
Vicar of *Hambleton*, in the County of *Rutland*.



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THE
Rabbinical LETTER

Is as follows.

S I R,



AFTER condoling with you for the extraordinary Penalty that was laid on you for my Invective against *Jesus's* Miracle of turning Water into Wine ; which, in my Opinion, you should not have been so heavily charged with ; because it was purely Cabalistical, and contains in it nothing better or worse,

A 3 than

than the Conceptions that we *Jews* entertain of *Jesus* and his Miracles: I here send you my Thoughts on the short Account you have given of the Antiquity of the allegorical Method of the Interpretation of Scripture.

You, and the Fathers of your Church, are certainly in the right on't, to make it as old as *Moses*; agreeably to the Opinion that we Cabbalistical *Jews* at this Day entertain of it. If it was of later Date and Original, your Adversaries are obliged to assign the Time when, and the Occasion how such a surprizing and extraordinary Method of Interpretation was introduced into the *Jewish* Nation.

If

If our Ancestors, in the Days of God's inspired Prophet, *Moses*, heard of none but literal Senses of the Law; and if neither he, nor God himself, ever intended they should run into the allegorical Strain, I ask when, and what was that Incident, which turned the Heads of our ancient Nation so religiously and devoutly to it? I can easily conceive how it came to pass, that the Sect of the *Caraites* amongst us *Jews*, who now adhere to the Letter, deserted mystical Interpretations; and why your Ministers of the Letter have forsaken them: And that was, because they don't relish nor apprehend those divine Mysteries, which your and our ancient Allegorists so much talk'd of, as veiled and latent under the Law of

Moses.

Moses. But if this be a good Reason, why they have forsaken the allegorical Method, it is a much better Reason why our Ancestors, of themselves, should never have taken it up. And therefore it is plain to me, that God and *Moses*, upon the Institution of the Law, at the same Time imparted the allegorical Method, or it could never afterwards, by Chance, have enter'd into the Heads of Men, who have hitherto discerned so little Use and Fruits of it.

The Reason why God, by *Moses*, communicated to the *Israelites*, and by his Providence since, has kept up the Allegorical way of Interpretation of the Scriptures, was to prepare the World for the Reception of
the

the *Messiah*, who was to be the Accomplisher of them in an Allegorical Sense; and our Ancestors accordingly so much exercised their Thoughts in divine and mystical Contemplations on the Law; because they fancied they could thereby, as through a Glass, darkly, attain to some glimmering Foresight of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*. For you must know, that our old Cabbalists held, (what your *Jesus* undertook to fulfil) that all Things that were written in the Law and the Prophets, were, to a Tittle, Type and Prophecy of the *Messiah*, who would be so far the clear Fulfiller and Illustrator of them, as that Men would then see God Face to Face. And, to be Particular, they expected, in the first Place, that the *Messiah*

B

would

would work the Redemption of his Church after the same Manner, and by the like Signs and Wonders that *Moses* wrought the Deliverance of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*.

Agreeable to these our old Opinions of the Scripture, and to our Expectations of a *Messiah*, did the Fathers of your Church endeavour to prove *Jesus's Messiahship*, by an allegorical Explication and Application of the Law and the Prophets to him. But in as much as they labour'd in vain, proving little or nothing this way, to the Satisfaction of our old *Jews*; and in as much as your Priesthood have altogether given over this way of Proof, we persist in our Disbelief of *Jesus's Messiahship*, and expect another for the fore-

[II]

forefaid grand Purpofes. Give me Leave here to make an Objection, founded on the concurrent and contentient Opinions of your Fathers, and our Anceftors, againft the *Mef-
fiabship* of *Jesus*; which if your Priests can answer, agreeably to their united Opinions, they will not only make a Convert of me, but open a Door for the Conversion of our whole Nation.

It is agreed between us *Jews*, and you Christians, (excepting two or three modern Commentators) that the Words of *Deuteronomy*, xviii. 18. *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto thee*; are a Prophecy of the *Messiah*. From which Prophecy our Ancestors looked upon *Moses* as a Type of the

Messiah in all Things ; and expected that the *Messiah*, at his Coming, would, by way of Antitype, imitate and resemble *Moses* in all the History of his Life, just as Face answereth to Face in a Glass, or as a Substance agrees to its Shadow. And I am well assured that the Fathers of your Church accordingly held and believed, what they endeavoured to prove, that there was an exact Similitude between *Jesus* in the Christian Church, and *Moses* in the *Jewish*. Now if your Priesthood can perfect that Proof, and shew me, either in a literal or allegorical Sense , an exact Resemblance, Correspondence and Likeness between them, I must of Necessity turn Christian. It may be perhaps a Work of too large an
Extent,

Extent, for them to shew this Agreement between *Jesus* and *Moses*, in all and every Particular: I will be content therefore, if they can shew me a Similitude between them, in a small part of *Moses's* Life; as for Instance, in the History of *Moses's* delivering the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*. It was most expressly the Opinion of our Ancestors, that the *Messiah* would deliver his People from Bondage; and, if I forget not, from *Roman* Bondage; after the manner, and by the like Wonders, that *Moses* delivered his People from *Egyptian*. *Jerome*, a Father of your Church, has recorded this as the universal Opinion of our Ancestors, and therefore you have the less Reason to question it. And agreeably to this Opinion of our
 Ance-

Ancestors, the Fathers of your Church asserted, that Christ was such a *Messiah*, and did deliver his Church from *Roman* Servitude; after the same Manner (in a Figure) that *Moses* delivered his *Israelites* out of *Egypt*. Nay, your Apostle *Paul* seems to assert it; saying, *Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our Fathers were under the Cloud, and all passed through the Sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the Cloud, and in the Sea. Now these Things were our Examples or Types. In which Words Paul* apparently alludes to, and confirms the Opinion of our Ancestors, which he had imbibed before his Conversion; and intimates, that *Jesus*, whom he took for the *Messiah*, was working a Redemption

demption of his Church, after the
 manner of the Deliverance of the
Israelites out of *Egypt*. And so
 did your Fathers understand these
 Words of *Paul*; and accordingly
 many of them labour'd to shew the
 Similitude between the *Israelitish*
 and Christian Redemption, in order
 to the Conversion of the *Jews*.
 But they, it seems, labour'd in vain,
 shewing no tolerable nor visible
 Likeness of this Sort between *Jesus*
 and *Moses*; and therefore our Na-
 tion to this Day, continues in
 Disbelief of *Jesus's Messiahship*.
 However, we have not so pertinaci-
 ously rejected *Jesus's Messiahship*, as
 not to give you Leave to resume the
 old Argument of it, from his Like-
 ness to *Moses* in all Things. If your
 Priests can now show a Likeness be-
 tween

tween them; if they can at this Day prove that *Jesus* wrought the like Miracles and Wonders (though in a figurative and allegorical Sense) for the Redemption of his Church from *Roman* Servitude, as *Moses* did for the Deliverance of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, we will grant him to be the *Messiah*, and will believe in him. But as we despair of such a Proof, so we reasonably persist in our Disbelief of his *Messiahship*. Your Divines, indeed, because of the foresaid Prophecy in *Deuteronomy*, do talk of a Likeness between *Moses* and *Jesus*; but it is not at all agreeable to the Sentiments of your Fathers, or the Expectations of our Ancestors, concerning the *Messiah's* Similitude to *Moses*. They tell us that *Jesus* and *Moses* were alike,
because

against *Jesus's Messiahship*; an Objection that is founded on the concurrent Opinions of our Ancestors, and of your Fathers: And I shall with Longings and Impatience wait, till I hear what they have to say to it. The Objection, in my Opinion, absolutely destroys *Jesus's Pretences* to the *Messiahship*, unless his Priests, by way of Answer to it, can prove the foresaid Similitude between him and *Moses*; between the Miracles of the one, and the Miracles of the other; between the Deliverance of the *Jewish*, and the Redemption of the Christian Church, out of an *Egypt*.

I am thinking what your Clergy can say to the Objection. Will they deny, that it was the Opinion of
both

both your Fathers and of our Ancestors, that there ought to be such a Similitude between the *Messiah* and *Moses*, as is before describ'd? That they can't do, because of the innumerable Testimonies to be produced out of them to confirm it. Will they then say, that it was a false and erroneous Opinion, which both ancient *Jews* and Fathers entertained concerning the *Messiah*? This surely they will not do; because of the Consequence, which charges the Apostle *Paul* himself (in the above-cited Place) and the primitive Christians, with the grossest Error and Mistake, concerning *Jesus* and his *Messiahship*: And yet I can't think they will ever give into the joint Opinion aforesaid, of both *Jews* and Fathers; because of the Impossibility

sibility of proving *Jesus* to be like *Moses* in all Things, according to the literal Sense of the Law, which they adhere to; and because of the Improbability of doing it, in an allegorical Sense, after the way of their Fathers; or, in all this Time surely, the Matter must have been made out, to the Satisfaction and Conversion of our Nation.

I long, I tell you, to hear what your Christian Priesthood will say to the Objection; which surely they will not let slip, without their Remarks and Observations upon it, any more than my Objections against the literal Story of some of *Jesus's* Miracles. And this is your and my Comfort, that if you publish this present Objection against
Jesus's

Jesus's Messiahship, the Clergy can't account it a ludicrous, prophane, and blasphemous one (as they did my others) and so bring you again under Prosecution for it: No, it is a plain, serious, and reasonable Objection, founded on ancient *Jewish* and Ecclesiastical Authority; and a pertinent, solid, and rational Answer, is expected to it.

Now the Controversy about *Jesus's Messiahship* is thus far revived and commenced, let us, in God's Name, go on with it, 'till we come to a final Determination, either in the Demonstration or Confutation of it. Your Clergy can't, I think, for Shame, any more interrupt the free Course of the Controversy, which will make us *Jews* secretly

secretly insult and triumph over them; and not only confirm us in our Unbelief of *Jesus's Messiahship*, but will occasion others to desert their Faith in him.

It is a strange Thing to consider how your Priesthood have, in these latter Ages, managed the Controversy between *Jews* and Christians, all by themselves; furiously disputing against Adversaries, whom they will not allow with Impunity to speak in their own Cause: So do they make God, who is to decide the Controversy, like an unjust and partial Judge, that will hear only the Pleadings and Evidence on one side of the Question.

But

But your Clergy will say, that in their Writings against the *Jews*, they make Objections for us, as well as Answers for themselves, and that is sufficient. Not so, say I, unless their Objections were as good and strong as we can make for our selves. But however, if your Divines so please, I will thus agree the Matter with them; *viz.* that they alone shall make Objections for us, if they'll let us alone to make Answers for them; which is most just and equal; and then the World shall behold the most pleasant and comical Farce of a Controversy, they ever were entertained with.

I remember, that in my Letter you published against *Jesus's* Resurrection, I promised the Controversy
be-

tween the *Jews* and Christians, by my Consent, should turn on that Miracle. Your Clergy, one or other of them, have answered that Letter; and so might expect to hear of my Conversion, if I had nothing to reply to them. My Reply you durst not publish, for fear of worldly Tribulation, and so I am free from that Promise. But now that you have fortunately given me an Occasion to make the more proper and substantial Objection against *Jesus's Messiahship*, herein contained, I hope it will be freely and fully debated and considered, to the Determination of the Controversy between us. So wishing you Health and Happiness, I am yours,

N. N.

To



To which I ANSWER.



Though *Jesus* was not such a temporal Deliverer as the Generality of the *Jews* did vainly imagine the *Messiah* should be; yet *Jesus Christ* did as truly, effectually and literally deliver the Christian Church from *Roman* Servitude, as *Moses* did the Children of *Israel* from *Egyptian* Bondage; and that too, by the very same Means; *viz.* by working divine Miracles, that Christ delivered his Church.

D

Just

Just immediately before our blessed Saviour ascended into Heaven, his Disciples asked him, saying, *Lord, wilt thou at this Time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* The Prophet *Daniel* having foretold that the Saints of the most High should take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, *even for ever and ever.* *Jesus answered, and said unto them, it is not for you to know the Times or the Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own Power.* Christ does not here tell them he will not deliver them, but conceals the Time when.

From uncontested History we know, that in the Time of *Constantine the Great*, the Christian Church was entirely freed from *Roman* Servitude,

vitude, and that the Saints of the
 Most High did possess the King-
 dom: That is, the *Roman* Empire
 became Christian; the People be-
 ing convinced of the Truth of the
 Christian Religion, from the divine
 Miracles our blessed Saviour had
 wrought, when he was here upon
 Earth. But yet it is worth Obser-
 vation, that God, in *Deuteronomy*,
 does not say, *I will raise thee up a*
Deliverer like unto Moses; but only
 says, *I will raise thee up a Pro-*
phet like unto Moses; and a Pro-
 phet like unto *Moses*, *Jesus Christ*
 certainly was, and would have
 been, though his Church had con-
 tinued in Thralldom to this very
 Day.

However, a Spiritual Deliverance from Sin and Satan, the Church of Christ had gained before ; but now the Similitude between *Moses* and Christ, appears very plain in a temporal Deliverance. It is true, the ancient Fathers of our Church, who wrote before the Time of *Constantine*, could not set forth a temporal Deliverance; they therefore insisted on a spiritual Deliverance, a Deliverance from Sin and Satan, a Deliverance far surpassing all other Deliverances : But now, the Likeness between *Moses* and Christ, appears very plain to every sober Mind ; *Moses* reveal'd the Will of God to Man, and so did *Jesus Christ* ; *Moses* wrought Miracles to prove his divine Mission, and so did *Jesus Christ* : *Moses* by Miracles wrought

wrought the Deliverance of the *Israelites* from *Egyptian* Bondage; and so did *Jesus Christ*, his Church from *Roman* and Diabolical Servitude. But sure it is childish and silly to insist on an equal Number of Miracles, and on Miracles of the same Nature and Kind, to compleat the Similitude between *Moses* and *Christ*; I therefore pass it by with great Contempt, and will never answer such trifling Objections.

As to allegorical Interpretations of Scripture; when they began, or how they began, or when they will end, I declare it, I don't know; but this I know, that *Moses* cannot be proved to be the Author of them; Presumption, strong Presumption, lies the other way: *Moses* in all his Writings, has
said

said nothing of allegorical Interpretations, nor hinted any such Thing; not but that allegorical Interpretations of the Old Testament may, and ought to be admitted, when stamp'd by Divine Authority; but where no such divine Authority appears, they must be rejected.

F I N I S.

